



JUN
01

Shimmering Flowers

Nancy Lorenz's Lacquer
and Bronze Landscapes
June 1 - September 30 in the
Center House Leonhardt Galleries

Opening Reception and ikebana
demonstration May 31, 5–7 p.m.

INSPIRED BY NATURE

Nancy Lorenz's Art Featured in BBG's Leonhardt Galleries

This summer, BBG proudly presents the work of Nancy Lorenz, a New York City-based artist whose work incorporates technique from traditional Asian craft. For *Shimmering Flowers*, the artist has created gilt and mother-of-pearl paintings that complement the Garden's collection of flora. Drawing on her years spent living in Japan, Lorenz will also present tabletop landscape vessels in cast bronze, creating a dialogue with the gallery and her own 35-year history as a noted contemporary abstract painter. In advance of the opening, BBG's Director of Marketing and Communications Robin Parow discussed the upcoming exhibit, its unique elements, and the artist's journey from Tokyo to Stockbridge with Lorenz.

Robin Parow: Nancy, it's such a pleasure to welcome you to the Garden! Your work has appeared in museums and galleries throughout the world, and in publications including *Harper's Bazaar*, *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Decor*, *Vogue* and the *Financial Times*. Could you provide a backdrop of your artistic journey? Who were some of your role models as an up-and-coming artist?

Nancy Lorenz: Growing up in Japan I got to visit artists' studios of all kinds — potters, painters, wood block masters. Seeing all their tools and self-made worlds had me dreaming of doing the same thing myself one day. In Japan I grew up with the idea that there was no hierarchy between fine art and sublime craft. I always liked artists who worked in a range of materials and approaches. Louise Bourgeois remains one of my all-time heroes.

RP: For *Shimmering Flowers*, your amazing gilded and lacquered compositions will be on exhibit in the Center House Leonhardt Galleries. When planning the exhibit, how did you go about choosing the pieces? Have you created specific art for this exhibit?

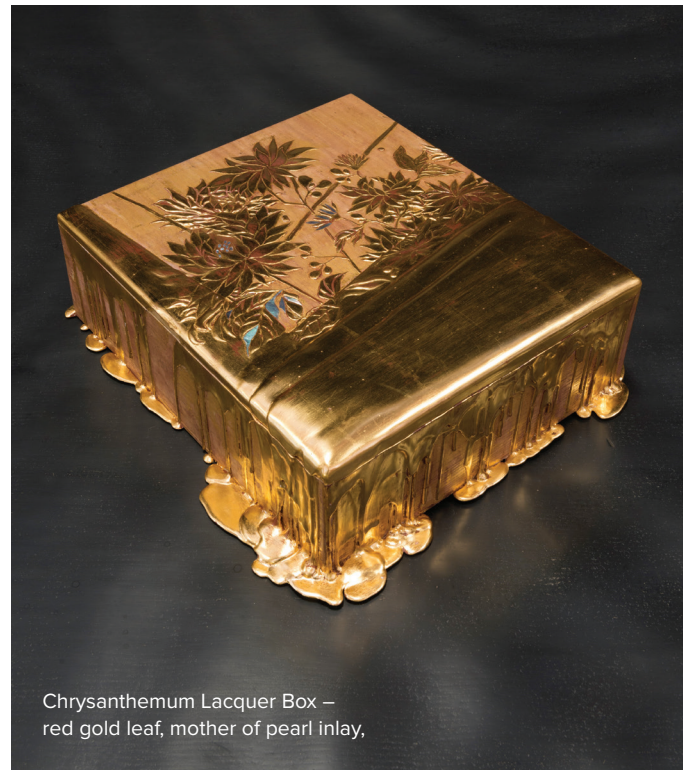
NL: BBG's Executive Director Michael Beck and Curator/Board Chairman Matt Larkin visited the studio and selected recent botanical and landscape paintings, and a new series in bronze that I'm excited about. I'm creating some new lacquer botanical studies based on plant clippings from the Garden. I'm also casting tabletop landscapes and fountains specifically for the exhibition. This is a new exploration for me, loosely based on bonseki, which is the Japanese art of creating miniature landscapes on black lacquer trays.

RP: Have you previously exhibited your work at a public garden, and how does the mood of the BBG galleries impact how your art can be displayed and viewed?

NL: This is the first time I've had the opportunity to show work outdoors. I especially love the domestic scale of the galleries, and find the inside/outside relationship liberating. When I first saw the galleries and gardens, I was remembering my grandparents' farm where I used to love spending the summers when I was young. It was in Valley Falls, New York, and my grandmother Jane was the most amazing gardener. She could grow anything in the rocky terrain. So I approach the restored interiors of the gallery and the surrounding gardens with some degree of familiarity.

RP: Your signature "liquid gold" style is defined as a type of water gilding. Can you describe the process?

NL: Traditional water gilding is a labor intensive process requiring many steps to achieve the desired effect. Many coats of gesso and bole are painted onto a poured surface and meticulously refined. Then a gossamer-thin sheet of gold is laid with a gilder's tip once water is applied to the surface. Finally, the gold is hand-burnished with an agate tool that gives it a molten liquid appearance.



Chrysanthemum Lacquer Box –
red gold leaf, mother of pearl inlay,

RP: How does using natural materials such as mother-of-pearl in your work provide an added element of artistic expression? Can you describe that?

NL: Nature has always influenced my work, both in the materials I use, and as a thematic reference. I have a palette made of mussel shells that I made years ago in Maine, and I still use it. I have also spent hours arranging sand from a family trip to Greece. Organic material such as mother of pearl has its own irregularities and provides unexpected patterning and incidental marks that I like to allow into my work.

RP: When not immersed in your artistic work, what do you enjoy doing?

NL: I do a lot of looking at art! And when I can, I enjoy traveling.

RP: What's on your "must do" list while in the Berkshires, and particularly at the Garden?

NL: I like the way the Garden engages with the public, fostering a community around art and nature in the Berkshires. I especially look forward to seeing how ikebana master Kan Asakura will work with the natural elements of the Garden to interact with my sculptures.

Shimmering Flowers is made possible through the generous support of the Dorothea L. Leonhardt Foundation, Inc.



Night Sky Screen 2016 – White gold leaf, mother of pearl inlay, glass, gesso, lacquer, on six wood panels